

Table 4. Monthly Climate Summary for Oakley, Idaho for years 1914 to 2003

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
Average Max. Temperature (F)	37.8	43.0	50.6	59.5	68.4	77.2	86.2	85.1	75.7	64.4	49.1	39.8	61.4
Average Min. Temperature (F)	18.8	23.1	27.6	33.3	40.4	47.1	54.8	53.1	44.6	36.0	27.4	20.7	35.6
Average Total Precipitation (in.)	0.77	0.65	0.89	1.23	1.54	1.22	0.72	0.74	0.77	0.82	0.76	0.78	10.89
Average Total SnowFall (in.)	7.2	4.4	4.0	2.1	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	2.9	5.6	27.1
Average Snow Depth (in.)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 5. Monthly Climate Summary for Malta, Idaho for years 1963 to 2002

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
Average Max. Temperature (F)	37.0	42.8	51.7	61.0	69.6	79.1	88.9	87.9	77.6	65.1	48.1	37.7	62.2
Average Min. Temperature (F)	16.8	20.7	26.2	31.5	37.9	43.7	49.8	48.1	40.0	31.5	24.1	16.5	32.2
Average Total Precipitation (in.)	0.72	0.58	0.86	1.09	1.64	1.23	0.93	0.89	0.84	0.72	0.76	0.74	11.01
Average Total SnowFall (in.)	4.1	1.7	1.6	0.7	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	1.5	3.1	13.1
Average Snow Depth (in.)	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1

3.0 Existing Conditions and Resources

This section identifies important wildland fire-related issues and their relationship to existing conditions in Cassia County. Existing conditions in Cassia County were determined by: (1) interviewing local, state, and federal employees and county residents; (2) driving the main roads within each fire district; (3) inspecting fuel loads adjacent to roads and calculating the distance this fuel occurred along the road; (4) evaluating road surface conditions, bridge weight limits, and road classifications for accessibility by large firefighting equipment such as tenders and pump trucks; (5) photographing representative structures and visually checking these structures for fire hazard and safety, including defensible space, location of propane tanks, proximity of fire hydrants and/or water sources, ingress and egress, and type of siding and/or roofing material; and (6) completing a Wildland Fire Hazard Assessment, Structural Assessment, and Community Assessment Form at specific locations within each fire district. Structures were selected based on but not limited to: (a) proximity to a wildland-urban interface, and (b) exhibiting a fire hazard and safety concern such as adjacent to highly flammable sources (e.g., large fields, vacant lots) or flammable material within 10 feet of the structure. Structures were defined as homes and other buildings (e.g., barns, garages, or maintenance buildings) with economic value to the landowner, or historic buildings.

3.1 Risk of Fires and Fire Frequency

The risk of wildfires within or adjacent to Cassia County is generally moderate to high due to an accumulation of flammable fuels over the past decade. Cool wet springs have increased grass and shrub density within the sagebrush-steppe and persistent drought has led to a moderate to high fire danger. Figure 3 shows fuel loads and historical fire perimeters for years (1972-2002). The highest fire frequency occurred in the extreme northern edge of the county and almost entirely on BLM lands. This area is currently not in a Fire Protection District.

3.2 Slope Risk Model

Figure 4 shows the Slope Risk Model for Cassia County. Steep slopes cause fires to spread rapidly because of convection and radiant heat and the fact that the flames are closer to the fuels. The model was developed using 30-meter spatial resolution digital elevation model (DEM). Slope was calculated from the DEM by ArcInfo processing (Anderson 1982; Russell and Weber 2000).

3.3 Mutual Aid Agreements

Mutual aid agreements exist among the seven Fire Protection Districts described below. This allows for temporary equipment and personnel assignments to other districts on an as needed basis. The Districts also have mutual aid agreements with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management.

3.4 Parcels vs. Subdivisions

The County and State subdivision regulations cover dividing of lands within the county, but there are many pieces of land or parcels that have homes on them that in some cases predate existing regulations. These parcels are not part of a legal subdivision and may have different regulations covering their future development. The corner lands not covered by center pivot irrigation systems will most likely be developed for single homes under the regulations covering parcels.

3.5 Specific Description of Assessment Area

The Cassia County assessment area includes seven Fire Protection Districts (FPDs) covering an estimated 829,000 acres, and three open areas not located within any fire district at an estimated 812,000 acres. The FPDs are ACE, Albion, Burley/North Cassia, Minidoka East, Oakley, Raft River, and Rock Creek. Within these FPDs there are many towns that contain subdivisions and single home sites. Table 6 shows each FPD and the landownership within each district. Figure 1 shows the location of each FPD within Cassia County.

Table 6. Landownership within Cassia County Fire Protection Districts

	BLM	Private	State	USFS	Total
ACE	82,686	55,937	12,492	4,078	155,193
Albion	4,281	30,531	7	38	34,857
Burley/North Cassia	10,091	184,352	4,526	3	198,971
Minidoka East	5,589	13,553	2,236	0	21,379
Oakley	0	62,286	1,262	66	63,614
Raft River	154,811	187,314	7,638	147	349,911
Rock Creek	71	5,099	0	0	5,169
Total	257,531	539,071	28,163	4,332	829,094

Cassia County Fuel Loads and Historical Fire Perimeters for Years 1972-2002.

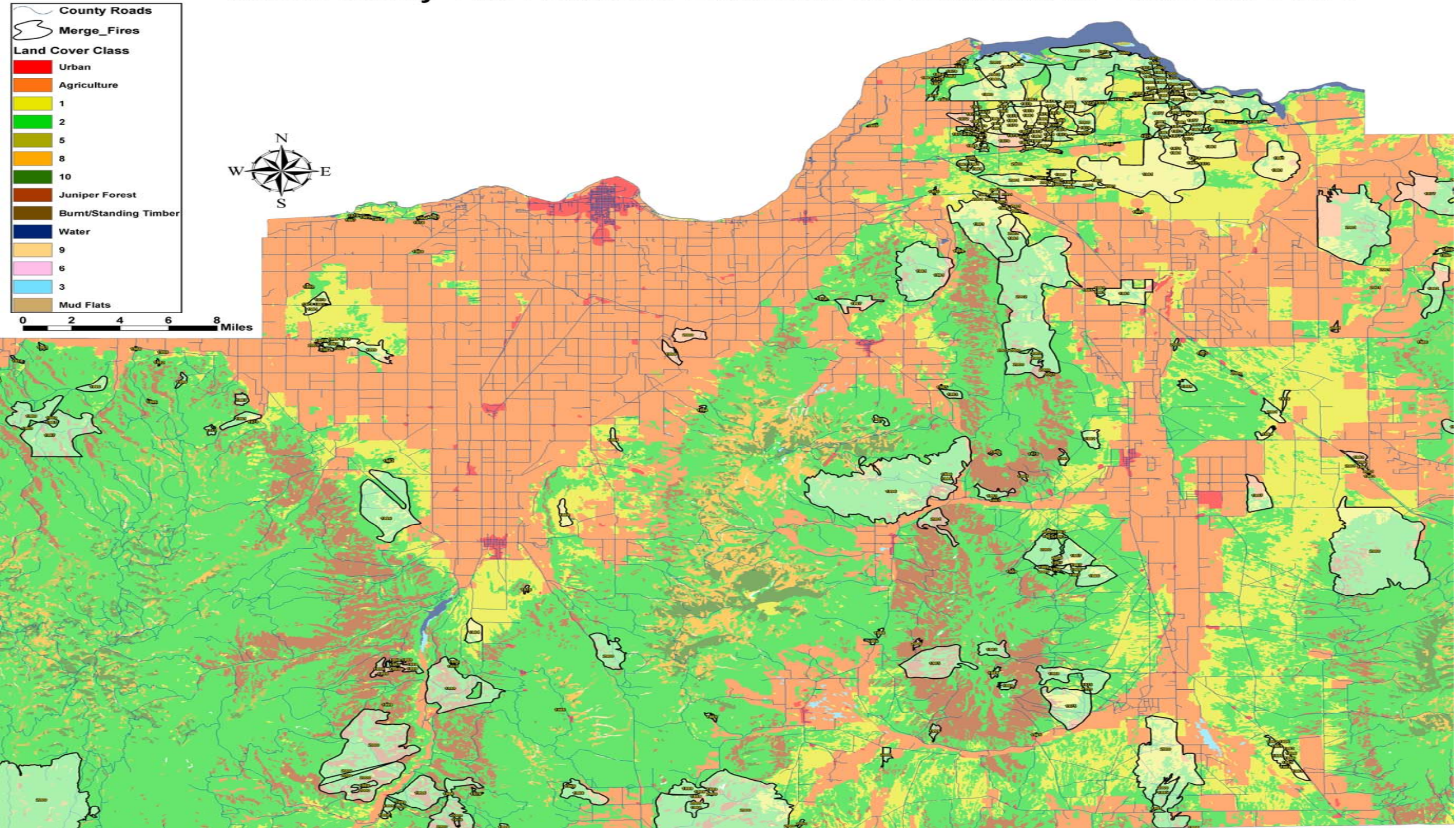


Figure 3. Fuel loads and historical fire perimeters for years 1972-2002.

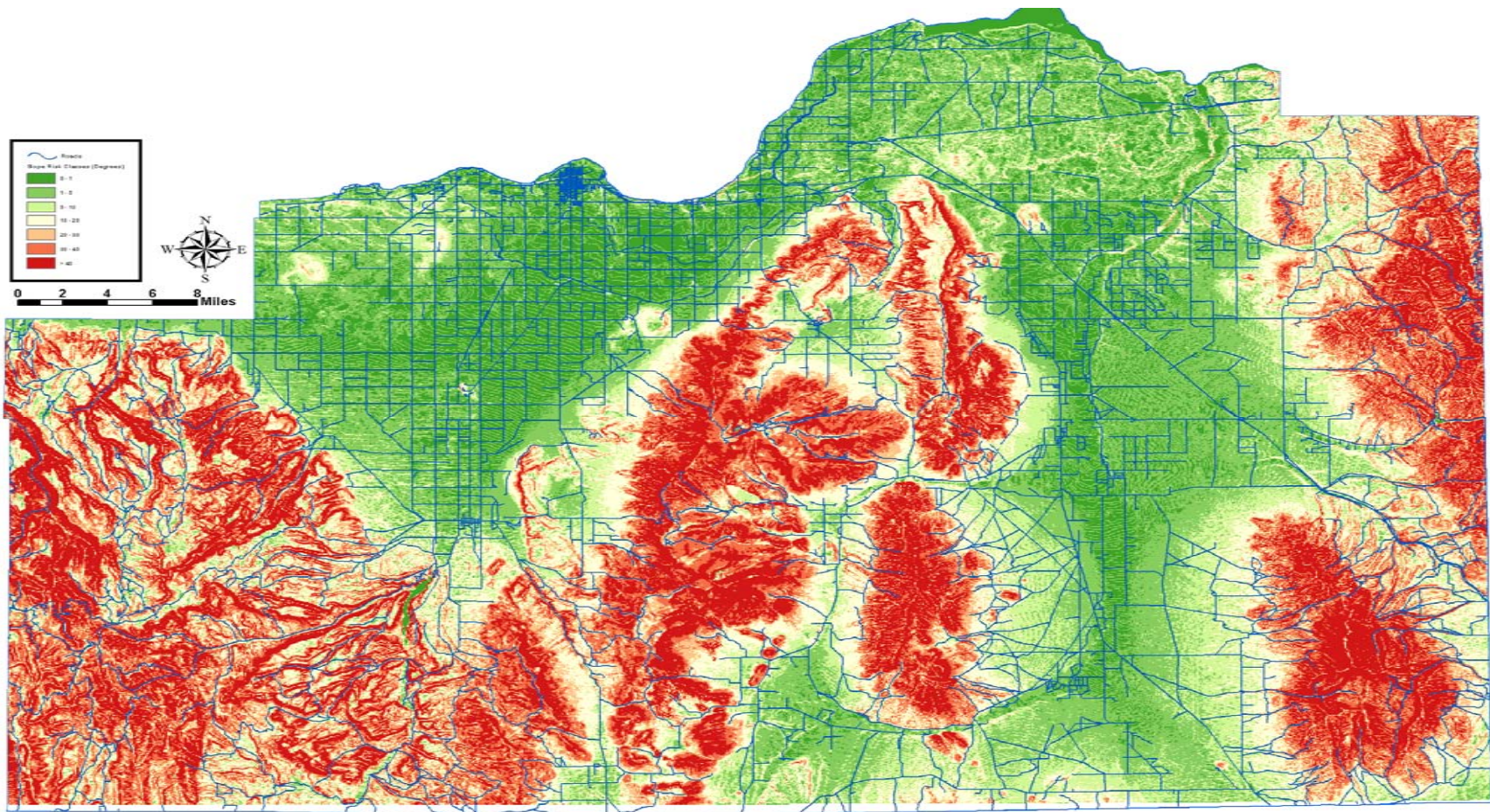


Figure 4. Slope risk model for Cassia County.